



Bureau of Land Management 220 E. Market Street • Meeker, Colorado 81641

BLM WHITE RIVER NEWS

June 20, 2012

Contact: Christopher B. Joyner, Public Affairs Specialist, (970) 210-2126

BLM conducts emergency water operations; closes public lands for drought stricken wild horses

MEEKER, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management recently began delivering water to wild horses in several areas in western Colorado in response to extreme drought conditions. Today BLM also issued an emergency closure for areas in the vicinity of Texas Mountain south of Rangely to further protect wild horses where the situation is particularly severe.

BLM is closely monitoring the wild horse herds it manages in Colorado and has begun supplementing natural water sources in three of the four wild horse herd management areas in the state, including the Piceance-East Douglas southwest of Meeker, the Sand Wash near Maybell, and the Spring Creek outside of Dolores. These are areas BLM manages specifically to maintain healthy wild horse herds in balance with other uses of the land. BLM is also closely monitoring the water situation in the Little Books Cliffs Wild Horse Range outside of DeBeque, which currently is not requiring supplemental water.

BLM issued the closure prohibiting public access south of Rangely in the West Douglas Herd Area, which is an area not planned for continued management of wild horses because it is not as suitable an area. BLM recently discovered a group of approximately 40 to 50 wild horses completely lacking any natural source of water. In addition to providing a large, temporary water tank and three water troughs, BLM is closing this area to reduce disturbance while the horses adjust to a new water source. The affected closed area is on or near Texas Mountain east of BLM Road 1214 and east of BLM Road 1063. Livestock are not currently in this specific area or using this water source.

BLM is closely monitoring the situation in the closure area and in the remainder of the West Douglas area, which holds an estimated 135 additional wild horses.

“BLM is committed to maintaining healthy wild horses in the White River Field Office and in Colorado,” said Kent Walter, White River Field Office manager. “We will continue to monitor the situation here and elsewhere, and may need to take additional steps to ensure the wild horses are cared for humanely. According to Walter, hauling water to such a remote location is not likely a sustainable, long-term solution.

###